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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OLMERT VISIT/PALESTINE/ISLAM AND THE
U.S./EROSION OF U.S. MORALITY

1. SUMMARY: A columnist in "Al-Ittihad" describes the warm welcome Olmert received from members of Congress as hypocritical. "Al-Khaleej" advises the Hamas-led government to translate their words into actions by starting a plan based on the roadmap in order to give the Palestinian people some hope. A UAE columnist in "Al-Khaleej" claims American Muslims are unfairly treated in the U.S. An "Al-Khaleej" editorial asserts that the U.S. involvement in Iraq has caused a remarkable erosion to its moral reputation. End Summary.

2. Under headline "All for elections?!", a Kuwaiti intellectual, Dr. Saad Bin Taflah Al-Agami, wrote 05/27 op-ed in Abu Dhabi-based Arabic daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"There was unprecedented hypocrisy at the U.S. Congress last week when the speech of the Israeli prime minister was interrupted by 38 rounds of applause and received 18 standing ovations... The Israeli prime minister came to Washington to dictate to the U.S. president and Congress his unilateral plan of withdrawal, whether they agree or not. The U.S. president and Congress support his plan, while talks about the roadmap and the Palestinian state promised last year fade away. Any observer can see that the warm applause... is governed by the upcoming congressional elections expected to take place this coming November where the Jewish voice supporting Israel plays a decisive role. It is understandable that compliments have a niche in politics, but when there is a complete submission at the expense of everything else, the American policy crosses the line."

3. Under headline "A statement alone is not enough", Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 85,000) wrote 05/28 unsigned editorial:

"The national dialogue conference in its latest statement affirmed a number of fundamentals, most important of which is to deem the Palestinian blood as sacred and precious and that it is taboo to shed one drop of blood in the wrong place against their enemies. He also emphasized the fact that all efforts and controversial issues should be resolved through a national democratic dialogue. He called for a national and honorable code of ethics that would bring all forces together agreeing to ban internal killings regardless of the reason... If those who conferred and released their statements were really honest, they should now start translating their words into actions and set up a working plan on a Palestinian roadmap to give the Palestinian people some hope... Palestine is not some form of stocks sold and bought throughout Arab and international stock markets, nor is it a tender to bid, nor a piece of property on which any regime, faction or a group can act upon. Palestine is a land representing the history, the past, the present, the future and a sacred symbol which cannot be degraded or divided. It is a responsibility that all Palestinians should hold, protect and fight for. All that they should do is simply protect and support Palestine."

4. Under headline "Islam in the United States", a UAE columnist, Abu Khaldoun, wrote a 05/29 op-ed in Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 85,000):

"The image remains unchanged. For a Muslim who is living in the United States, it is as difficult for him to hold on to his religion as holding fire in his hands. Though Islam is the second most widely spread heavenly religion after Christianity, and though the internet spread different cultures to every house, only 2 percent of Americans know something about Islam, 10 percent believe Muslims worship the moon, one out of every four Americans believe Islam encourages violence and that Muslims teach their children hatred while belittling the value of human life, half of Americans think Islam supports oppressing women, and one out of every five Americans feels that Muslims should be arrested and their civil rights limited because they pose a source of danger to society and security."

5. Under headline "Erosion in the reputation of U.S. morality", Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 85,000) wrote 05/29 unsigned editorial:

"The crime in which U.S. Marines killed 24 Iraqi civilians in Al-Hadeetha last November, more than half of whom were children and women, affirms that it is time for the U.S. administration to learn its lesson. The war which the U.S. wages has incurred many economic, military, political and moral expenses. If its economic, military, and political costs were very obvious, its morality will sustain great losses in the long-term basis... The likes of these crimes causes the world to rage because these crimes violate the laws of war... This war has brought a catastrophe to Iraq, the region, and to the United States itself and it's time now for Americans to end their occupation."

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